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ROMANS 6

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

UBS[4]	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Dead to Sin But Alive in Christ	Dead to Sin, Alive to God	Dying and Rising With Christ	Dead to Sin But Alive in Christ	Baptism
6:1-11	6:1-14	6:1-4	6:1-4	6:1-7
		6:5-11	6:5-11	
				6:8-11
				Holiness, Not Sin to be Master
6:12-14		6:12-14	6:12-14	6:12-14
Slaves of Righteousness	From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God	The Two Slaveries	Slaves of Righteousness	The Christian is Freed From the Slavery of Sin
6:15-23	6:15-23	6:15-19	6:15-19	6:15-19
				The Reward of Sin and the Reward of Uprightness
		6:20-23	6:20-23	6:20-23

READING CYCLE THREE (see "Bible Interpretation Seminar")
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Romans 6:1-8:39 forms a unit of thought (literary unit) that deals with the Christian's relationship to sin (i.e., sanctification). This is a very important issue because the gospel is based on the free unmerited grace of God through Christ (Rom. 3:21-5:21) so, therefore, how does sin affect the believer? Romans 6 is based on two supposed questions, Rom. 6:1 and 15. Verse 1 relates to 5:20, while Rom. 6:15 relates to 6:14. The first is related to sin as a lifestyle (PRESENT TENSE), the second to individual acts of sin (aorist tense). It is obvious also

that Rom. 6:1-14 deal with believers' freedom from sin's domination, while Rom. 6:15-23 deal with believers freedom to serve God as they previously served sin—totally, completely, and whole-heartedly.

B. Sanctification is both (see SPECIAL TOPIC: SANCTIFICATION)
   1. a position (imputed like justification at salvation, Rom. 3:21-5:21)
   2. a progressing Christlikeness
      a. Rom. 6:1-8:39 express this truth theologically
      b. Rom. 12:1-15:13 express it practically

C. Often commentators must theologically split the subject of justification and positional sanctification to help grasp their biblical meanings. In reality they are simultaneous acts of grace (positional, 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:11). The mechanism for both is the same—God's grace demonstrated in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection/ascension which is received by faith (cf. Eph. 2:8-9).

D. This chapter teaches the potential full maturity (sinlessness, cf. 1 John 3:6,9; 5:18) of God's children in Christ. Romans 7 and 1 John 1:8-2:1 show the reality of believers' continuing sinfulness.

   Much of the conflict over Paul's view of forgiveness (i.e., justification by grace through faith) was related to the issue of morality. The Jews wanted to assure godly living by demanding that new converts conform to the Mosaic law. It must be admitted that some did and do use Paul's views as a license to sin (cf. Rom. 6:1,15; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). Paul believed that the indwelling Spirit, not an external code, would produce godly Christlike followers. In reality this is the difference between the Old Covenant (cf. Deuteronomy 27-28) and the New Covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-27).

E. Baptism is simply a physical illustration of the spiritual reality of justification/sanctification. In Romans the twin doctrines of positional sanctification (justification) and experiential sanctification (Christlikeness) are both stressed. Being buried with Him (Rom. 6:4) is parallel with "be crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6).

F. The keys to overcoming temptation and sin in the Christian's life are
   1. Know who you are in Christ. Know what He has done for you. You are free from sin! You are dead to sin!
   2. Reckon/count your position in Christ into your daily life situations.
   3. We are not our own! We must serve/obey our Master. We serve/obey out of gratitude and love to the One who first loved us and gave Himself for us!
   4. The Christian life is a supernatural life. It, like salvation, is a gift from God in Christ. He initiates it and provides its power. We must respond in repentance and faith, both initially and daily.
   5. Don't play around with sin. Label it for what it is. Turn from it; flee from it. Don't put yourself into the place of temptation.
   6. Sin in the believer is an addiction that can be broken, but it takes knowledge of the gospel, the presence of the Spirit, time, effort, and volition.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 6:1-7

[1]What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? [2]May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? [3]Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? [4]Therefore

we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. [5]For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, [6]knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; [7]for he who has died is freed from sin.

6:1

NASB	**"Are we to continue to sin that grace might increase"**
NKJV, Peshitta	**"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound"**
NRSV	**"Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound"**
TEV	**"That we should continue to live in sin so that God's grace will increase"**
NJB	**"Does it follow that we should remain in sin so as to let grace have greater hope"**
REB	**"Shall we persist in sin, so that there may be all the more grace"**

This is a PRESENT ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE. It literally asks the question, are Christians "to abide with" or "to embrace" sin? This question looks back to Rom. 5:20. Paul used a hypothetical objector (diatribe) to deal with the potential misuse of grace (cf. 1 John 3:6,9; 5:18). God's grace and mercy are not meant to give a license for rebellious living.

Paul's gospel of a free salvation as the gift of God's grace through Christ (cf. Rom. 3:24; 5:15, 17; 6:23) raised many questions about life style righteousness. How does a free gift produce moral uprightness? Justification and sanctification must not be separated (cf. Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 8:21; 11:28; John 13:17; Rom. 2:13; James1:22-25; 2:14-26).

On this point let me quote F. F. Bruce in *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*,

> "the baptism of Christians constituted the frontier between their old unregenerate existence and their new life in Christ: it marked their death to the old order, so that for a baptized Christian to go on in sin was as preposterous as it would be for an emancipated slave to remain in bondage to his former owner (cf. Rom. 6:1-4, 15-23) or for a widow to remain subject to 'the law of her husband'" (pp. 281-82, cf. Rom. 7:1-6).

In James S. Stewart's book, *A Man in Christ*, he writes:

> "The *locus classicus* for all this side of the apostles' thought is to be found in Rom. 6. There Paul, with magnificent vigor and effort, drives home to heart and conscience the lesson that to be united with Jesus in His death means for the believer a complete and drastic break with sin" (pp. 187-88).

6:2 "may it never be" This is a rare OPTATIVE form which was a grammatical MOOD or MODE used of a wish or prayer. It was Paul's stylistic way (i.e., Hebraic idiom) of answering a hypothetical objector. It expressed Paul's shock and horror at unbelieving mankind's misunderstanding and abuse of grace (cf. Rom. 3:4,6,31).

▣ **"we who died to sin"** This is an AORIST ACTIVE INDICATIVE, meaning "we have died." The SINGULAR "sin" is used so often throughout this chapter. It seems to refer to our "sin nature" inherited from Adam (cf. Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22). Paul often uses the concept of death as imagery to show the believer's new relationship to Jesus. They are no longer subject to sin's mastery.

▣ **"still live in it"** This is literally "walk." This imagery was used to stress either our lifestyle faith (cf. Eph. 4:1; 5:2,15) or lifestyle sin (cf. Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:17). Believers cannot be happy in sin!

6:3-4 "have been baptized. . .have been buried" These are both AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVES. This grammatical form often emphasized a completed act accomplished by an outside agent, here the Spirit. They are parallel in this context.

SPECIAL TOPIC: BAPTISM

▣ **"into Christ Jesus"** The use of *eis* (into) parallels the Great Commission of Matt. 28:19, where new believers are baptized *eis* (into) the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The PREPOSITION is also used to describe the believers being baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ in 1 Cor. 12:13. *Eis* in this context is synonymous with *en* (in Christ) in Rom. 6:11, which is Paul's favorite way to denote believers. It is a LOCATIVE OF SPHERE. Believers live and move and have their being in Christ. These PREPOSITIONS express this intimate union, this sphere of fellowship, this vine and branch relationship. Believers identify with and join with Christ in His death (cf. Rom. 6:6; 8:17), in His resurrection (cf. Rom. 6:5), in His obedient service to God, and in His Kingdom!

SPECIAL TOPIC: CHRIST JESUS AS LORD

▣ **"into His death. . .we have been buried with Him"** Baptism by immersion illustrates death and burial (cf. Rom. 6:5 and Col. 2:12). Jesus used baptism as imagery for His own death (cf. Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50). The emphasis here is not a doctrine of baptism, but of the Christian's new, intimate relationship to Christ's death and burial. Believers identify with Christ's baptism, with His character, with His sacrifice, with His mission. Sin has no power over believers!

6:4 "we have been buried with Him through baptism into death" In this chapter, as is characteristic of all of Paul's writing, he uses many *sun* (with) compounds (e.g., three in Eph. 2:5-6).

1. *sun* + *thaptō* = co-buried, Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; also note Rom. 6:8
2. *sun* + *phuō* = co-planted, Rom. 6:5
3. *sun* + *stauroō* = co-crucified, Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20
4. *sun* + *zaō* = co-exist, Rom. 6:8; 2 Tim. 2:11 (also has co-died and co-reign)

▣ **"so we too might walk in newness of life"** This is an AORIST ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE. The expected result of salvation is sanctification. Because believers have received God's grace through Christ and have been indwelt by the Spirit, their lives must be different. Our new life (*zoē*) does not bring us salvation, but it is the result of salvation (cf. Rom. 6:16, 19; 8:4; 13:13; 14:15; and Eph. 1:4; 2:8-9,10; James 2:14-26). This is not an either/or question, faith or works, but there is a sequential order.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SANCTIFICATION

▣ **"newness of life"** This is "new" in quantity, not just new in time. It is used in a variety of ways in the NT to speak of the radical change the Messiah brings. It is the new age, cf. Isaiah 40-66.

1. new covenant, Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8,13; 9:15
2. new commandment, John 13:34; 1 John 2:7,8; 2 John 5
3. new creation, 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15
4. newness of life, Rom. 6:4
5. newness of spirit, Rom. 7:6
6. new man, Eph. 2:15; 4:24
7. new heavens and earth, 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1 (cf. Isa. 66:22)
8. new name, Rev. 2:17; 3:12 (cf. Isa. 62:2)
9. new Jerusalem, Rev. 3:12; 21:2
10. new song, Rev. 5:9; 14:3 (cf. Isa. 42:10)

▣ **"Christ was raised"** In this context the Father's acceptance and approval of the Son's words and works are expressed in two great events.

1. Jesus' resurrection from the dead
2. Jesus' ascension to the Father's right hand

All three persons of the Trinity were involved in raising Jesus from the realm of the dead. See full note at Rom. 6:9 and 8:11.

SPECIAL TOPIC: RESURRECTION

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TRINITY

▣ **"the glory of the Father"** For "glory" see SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY (*kabod*, OT). For "Father" see SPECIAL TOPIC: THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

6:5 "if" This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE, which is assumed to be true from the writer's perspective or for his literary purposes. Paul assumed his readers were believers.

▣ **"we have become united with *Him*"** This is a PERFECT ACVTIVE INDICATIVE which could be translated, "have been and continue to be joined together" or "have been or continue to be planted together with." This truth is theologically analogous to "abiding" in John 15. If believers have been identified with Jesus' death (cf. Gal. 2:19-20; Col. 2:20; 3:3-5), theologically they should be identified with His resurrection life (cf. Rom. 6:10).

This imagery aspect of baptism as death was meant to show

1. we have died to the old life, the old covenant
2. we are alive to the Spirit, the new covenant

Christian baptism is, therefore, not the same as the baptism of John the Baptist, who was the last OT prophet. Baptism was the early church's opportunity for the new believer's public profession of faith. The earliest baptismal formula, to be repeated by the candidate, was "I believe Jesus is Lord" (cf. Rom. 10:9-13). This public declaration was a formal, ritual act of what had happened previously in experience. Baptism was not the mechanism of forgiveness, salvation, or the coming of the Spirit, but the occasion for their public profession and confession (cf. Acts 2:38). However, it also was not optional. Jesus commanded it (cf. Matt. 28:19-20), and exemplified it, (cf. Matt. 3; Mark 1; Luke 3) and it became part of the Apostolic sermons and procedures of Acts.

6:6

NASB, Peshitta	**"knowing this, that our old self was cricified with Him"**
NKJV	**"knowing this, that our old man was cricified with him"**
NRSV	**"We know that our old self was cricified with him"**
TEV	**"And we know this: our old being has been put to death with Christ on his cross"**
NJB	**"We must realize that our former selves have been cricified with him"**
REB	**"We know that our old humanity has been crucified with Christ"**

This is an AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE meaning "our old self has been once for all crucified by the Spirit." The PASSIVE VOICE denotes divine agency. This truth is crucial to victorious Christian living. Believers must realize their new relationship to sin (cf. Gal. 2:20; 6:14). Mankind's old fallen self (Adamic nature) has died with Christ (cf. Rom. 6:7; Eph. 4:22 and Col. 3:9). As believers we now have a choice about sin as Adam originally did.

▣

NASB, NKJV "that our body of sin might be done away with"

NRSV	**"so that the body of sin might be destroyed"**
TEV	**"in order that the power of the sinful self might be destroyed"**
NJB	**"to destroy the sinful body"**
REB	**"for the destruction of the sinful self"**
Peshitta	**"so that the sinful body might be destroyed"**

Paul uses the word "body" (*soma*) with several GENITIVE phrases.

1. body of (the) sin, Rom. 6:6
2. body of this death, Rom. 7:24
3. body of the flesh, Col. 2:11

Paul is speaking of the physical life of this age of sin and rebellion. Jesus' new resurrection body is the body of the new age of righteousness (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). Physicalness is not the problem (Greek philosophy), but sin and rebellion. The body is not evil. Christianity affirms the belief in a physical body in eternity (cf. 1 Corinthians 15). However, the physical body is the battle ground of temptation, sin, and self.

This is an AORIST PASSIVE SUBJUNCTIVE. The phrase "done away with" meant "made inoperative," "made powerless," or "made unproductive," not "destroyed." This was a favorite word with Paul, used over twenty-five times. Our physical body is morally neutral, but it is also the battleground for the continuing spiritual conflict (cf. Rom. 6:12-13; 5:12-21; 12:1-2).

SPECIAL TOPIC: NULL AND VOID

6:7 "he who has died is freed from sin" This is an AORIST ACTIVE PARTICIPLE and a PERFECT PASSIVE INDICATIVE, meaning "he who has died has been and continues to be free from sin." Because believers are new creations in Christ they have been and continue to be set free from the slavery of sin and self inherited from Adam's fall (cf. Rom. 7:1-6).

The Greek term translated here as "freed" is the term translated elsewhere in the opening chapters as "justified" (ASV). In this context "freed" (NKJV, NRSV) makes much more sense (similar to its use in Acts 13:39). Remember, context determines word meaning, not a dictionary or preset technical definition. Words only have meaning in sentences and sentences only have meaning in paragraphs.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 6:8-11

[8]Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, [9]knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. [10]For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. [11]Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

6:8 "If" This is a FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE which is assumed to be true from the writer's perspective or for his literary purposes. Believer's baptism visually exemplifies one's death with Christ.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GREEK GRAMMATICAL TERMS

▣ **"we shall also live with Him"** This context demands a "here and now" orientation (cf. 1 John 1:7), not an exclusively future setting. Verse 5 speaks of our sharing Christ's death, while verse 8 speaks of our sharing His life. This is the same tension inherent in the biblical concept of the Kingdom of God. It is both here and now, yet future. Free grace must produce self-control, not license.

6:9 "having been raised from the dead" This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE (see 6:4, AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE).

The NT affirms that all three persons of the Trinity were active in Jesus' resurrection (see note at Rom. 8:11 and SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TRINITY.

1. the Spirit (cf. Rom. 8:11)
2. the Son (cf. John 2:19-22; 10:17-18)
3. and most frequently, the Father (cf. Acts 2:24,32; 3:15,26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30,33,34,37; 17:31; Rom. 6:4,9)

The Father's actions were confirmation of His acceptance of Jesus' life, death, and teachings. This was a major aspect of the early preaching of the Apostles.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE *KERYGMA* OF THE EARLY CHURCH

▣

NASB	**"death no longer is master over Him"**
NKJV, NRSV, Peshitta	**"Death no longer has dominion over Him"**
TEV	**"death will no longer rule over him"**
NJB	**"Death has no power over him anymore"**
REB	**"he is no longer under the dominion of death"**

The VERB *kurieuō* is from the term *kurios* (i.e., Lord), which means "owner," "master," "husband," or "lord," Jesus is now lord over death (cf. Rev. 1:18). Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection. There have been some people

1. taken to heaven alive (i.e., translated, Enoch and Elijah)
2. brought back to physical life (i.e., resuscitated)

Jesus is the only one who has been resurrected with a new age body. Jesus is the first to break the power of death (cf. 1 Corinthians 15)!

6:10 "for the death that He died, He died to sin" Jesus lived in a sinful world and although He never sinned, the sinful world crucified Him (cf. Heb. 10:10). Jesus' substitutionary death on mankind's behalf canceled the Law's requirements and consequences over them (cf. Gal. 3:13; Col 2:13-14).

▣ **"once for all"** In this context Paul is emphasizing the crucifixion of Jesus. His one-time death for sin has affected His followers' death to sin.

The book of Hebrews also emphasizes the ultimacy of Jesus' once-given sacrificial death (This is unlike Catholic mass which is theologically meant to represent a repeated crucifixion). This once-done salvation and forgiveness are forever accomplished (cf. "once" [*ephapax*], Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10 and "once for all" [*hapax*], Heb. 6:4; 9:7,26,27,28; 10:2; 12:26,27). This is the recurrent, accomplished, sacrificial affirmation.

▣ **"but the life that He lives, He lives to God"** The two AORISTS of Rom. 6:10a are contrasted with two PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVES in Rom. 6:10b. Believers died with Christ; believers live for God, through Christ (cf. Gal. 2:19-20). The goal of the gospel is not forgiveness only (justification) but service to God (sanctification). Believers are saved to serve!

6:11 "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin" This is a PRESENT MIDDLE (deponent) IMPERATIVE. This is an ongoing, habitual command for believers. Christians' knowledge of Christ's work on their behalf is crucial for daily life. The term "consider" (cf. Rom. 4:4,9), was an accounting term that meant "carefully add it up" and then act on that knowledge. Verses 1-11 acknowledged one's position in Christ (positional sanctification), while 12-13 emphasized walking in Him (progressive sanctification).

SPECIAL TOPIC: SANCTIFICATION

▣

NASB, NRSV, TEV, NJB "Christ Jesus"
NKJV "Christ Jesus our Lord"

The shorter reading occurs in MSS P^{46}, A, B, D, F, G. The UBS^4 gives it an "A" rating (certain). The expanded phrase is early (MSS P^{94}, א, C), but was probably added by a scribe from Rom. 6:23. Like the vast majority of textual variants, it makes little difference to the meaning of the text.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CHRIST JESUS AS LORD

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 6:12-14

12Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

6:12 "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body" This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE, which usually meant to stop an act already in process. The term "reign" relates to 5:17-21 and 6:23. Paul personifies several theological concepts.

1. death reigned as king (cf. Rom. 5:14,17; 6:23)
2. grace reigned as king (cf. Rom. 5:21)
3. sin reigned as king (cf. Rom. 6:12,14)

The real question is who is reigning in your life? The believer has the power in Christ to choose! The tragedy for the individual, the local church, and the Kingdom of God is when believers choose self and sin, even while claiming grace!

SPECIAL TOPIC: REIGNING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

6:13 "do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin" This is a PRESENT ACTIVE IMPERATIVE with the NEGATIVE PARTICLE which usually meant to stop an act already in process. This shows the potential for continuing sin in the lives of believers (cf. Rom. 7:1ff; 1 John 1:8-2:1). But the necessity of sin has been eliminated in the believer's new relationship with Christ, Rom. 6:1-11.

▣ **"as instruments"** This term (*hoplon*) referred to "a soldier's weapons" (cf. Rom. 13:12; John 18:3; 2 Cor. 6:7; 10:4). Our physical body is the battleground for temptation (cf. Rom. 6:12-13; 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:20; Phil. 1:20). Our lives publicly display the gospel.

▣ **"but present yourselves to God"** This is an AORIST ACTIVE IMPERATIVE which was a call for a decisive act (cf. Rom. 12:1). Believers do this at salvation by faith, but they must continue to do this throughout their lives.

Notice the parallelism of this verse.

1. same VERB and both IMPERATIVES
2. battle imagery
   a. weapons of unrighteousness
   b. weapons of righteousness
3. believers can present their bodies to sin or themselves to God

Remember, this verse is referring to believers—the choice continues; the battle continues (cf. Rom. 6:12,19; 1 Cor. 6:18-19; Eph. 6:10-18)!

6:14 "For sin shall not be master over you" This is a FUTURE ACTIVE INDICATIVE (cf. Ps. 19:13) functioning as an IMPERATIVE, "sin must not be master over you!" Sin is not master over believers because it is not master over Christ, (cf. Rom. 6:9; John 16:33).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 6:15-19

15What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! 16Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in *further* lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

6:15 This second supposed question (diatribe) is similar to Rom. 6:1. Both answer different questions about the Christian's relation to sin. Verse 1 deals with grace not being used as a license to sin, while Rom. 6:15 deals with the Christian's need to fight, or resist, individual acts of sin. Also, at the same time the believer must serve God now with the same enthusiasm with which he previously served sin (cf. Rom. 6:14).

▣

NASB, NKJV, TEV, Peshitta	**"Shall we sin"**
NRSV	**"Should we sin"**
NJB	**"that we are free to sin"**
REB	**"Are we to sin"**

The Williams and Phillips translations both translate this AORIST ACTIVE SUBMUNCTIVE as a PRESENT ACTIVE SUBJUNCTIVE similar to Rom. 6:1. This is not the proper focus. Notice the alternate translations

1. KJV, ASV, NIV – "shall we sin?"
2. The Centenary Translation – "Shall we commit an act of sin?"
3. RSV – "are we to sin?"

This question is emphatic in Greek and expected a "yes" answer. This was Paul's diatribe method of communicating truth. This verse expresses false theology! Paul answered this by his characteristic "May it never be." Paul's gospel of the radical free grace of God was misunderstood and abused by many false teachers.

6:16 The question expects a "yes" response. Humans serve something or someone. Who reigns in your life, sin or God? Who humans obey shows who they serve (cf. Gal. 6:7-8).

6:17 "But thanks be to God" Paul often breaks out into praise to God. His writings flow from his prayers and his prayers from his knowledge of the gospel.

SPECIAL TOPIC: PAUL'S PRAYER, PRAISE, AND THANKSGIVING TO GOD

▣ **"you were. . .you became"** This is the IMPERFECT TENSE of the VERB, "to be," which described their state of being in the past (slaves of sin) followed by an AORIST TENSE which asserts that their state of rebellion has ceased.

▣ **"You became obedient from your heart to that form of teaching"** In context, this refers to their justification by grace through faith, which must lead to daily Christlikeness.

The term "teaching" referred to Apostolic teaching or the gospel.

▣ **"heart"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: HEART

▣

NASB	**"that form of teaching to which you were committed"**
NKJV	**"that form of doctrine to which you were delivered"**
NRSV, NIV	**"to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted"**
TEV	**"the truth found in the teaching you received"**
NJB	**"to the pattern of teaching to which you were introduced"**
REB	**"to that pattern of teaching to which you were made subject"**
Peshitta	**"that form of doctrine which has been delivered to you"**

This thought is parallel to 1 Cor. 15:1 and refers to the gospel truths that these believers heard and received. The gospel is

1. a person to welcome
2. truths about that person to believe
3. a life like that person's to live!

▣ **"form"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: FORM (*TUPOS*)

6:18 "having been freed from sin" This is an AORIST PASSIVE PARTICIPLE. The gospel has freed believers by the agency of the Spirit through the work of Christ. Believers have been freed both from the penalty of sin (justification) and the tyranny of sin (sanctification, cf. Rom. 6:7 and 22). One day they will be free from the presence of sin (glorification, cf. Rom. 8:29-30).

▣ **"you became the slaves of righteousness"** This is an AORIST PASSIVE INDICATIVE, "you became enslaved to righteousness." Believers are freed from sin to serve God (cf. Rom. 6:14,19,22; 7:4; 8:2)! The goal of free grace is a godly life. Justification is both a legal pronouncement and an impetus for personal righteousness. God wants to save us and change us so as to reach others! Grace does not stop with individual believer's salvation (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS

6:19 "I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh" Paul is addressing the believers at Rome. Is he addressing a local problem he had heard about (jealousy among Jewish believers and Gentile believers) or is he asserting a truth about all believers? Paul used this phrase earlier in Rom. 3:5, as he does in Gal. 3:15.

Verse 19 is parallel to Rom. 6:16. Paul repeats his theological points for emphasis.

Some would say this phrase means that Paul was apologizing for using slave imagery. However, "because of the weakness of your flesh" does not fit this interpretation. Slavery was not viewed as an evil by first century society, especially in Rome. It was simply the culture of its day. Two thirds of the Roman world were slaves.

▣ **"flesh"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: FLESH (*SARX*)

▣ **"resulting in sanctification"** This is the goal of justification (cf. Rom. 6:22). The NT used this term in two theological senses related to salvation.

1. positional sanctification, which is the gift of God (objective aspect) given at salvation along with justification through faith in Christ (cf. Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Eph. 5:26-

27; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 10:10; 13:12; 1 Pet. 1:2)

2. progressive sanctification which is also the work of God through the Holy Spirit whereby the believer's life is transformed into the image and maturity of Christ (subjective aspect, cf. 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 4:3,7; 1 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 12:10,14)

Sanctification is both a gift and a command! It is a position (standing) and an activity (lifestyle)! It is an INDICATIVE (a statement) and an IMPEARTIVE (a command)! It comes at the beginning but does not mature until the end (cf. Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13).

SPECIAL TOPIC: SANCTIFICATION

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: ROMANS 6:20-23

[20]For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.
[21]Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. [22]But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. [23]For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

6:20-21 This is simply stating the opposite of Rom. 6:18 and 19. Believers can only serve one master (cf. Luke 16:13).

6:22-23 These verses form a logical progression of the wages paid by whom one serves. Thank God this discussion of sin and the believer ends on a grace focus! First is the gift of salvation through our cooperation, and then the gift of the Christian life, also through our cooperation. Both are received gifts through faith and repentance.

6:22 "you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life" The term "benefit," literally "fruit" is used in Rom. 6:21 to speak of the consequences of sin, but in Rom. 6:22 it speaks of the consequences of serving God. The immediate benefit is the believer's Christlikeness. The ultimate benefit is being with Him and like Him eternally (cf. 1 John 3:2). If there is no immediate result (changed life, cf. James 2) the ultimate result can be legitimately questioned (eternal life, cf. Matt. 7). "No fruit, no root!"

6:23 This is the summary of the entire chapter. Paul painted the choice in black and white. The choice is ours—sin and death or free grace through Christ and eternal life. It is very similar to the "two ways" of OT wisdom literature (Deut. 30:1,17; Psalm 1; Proverbs 4; 10-19; Matt. 7:13-14).

▣ **"the wages of sin"** Sin is personified as

1. a slave owner
2. a military general
3. a king who pays wages (cf. Rom. 3:9; 5:21; 6:9,14,17)

▣ **"the free gift of God is eternal life"** This word, translated "free gift" (*charisma*) was from the root for grace (*charis*, cf. Rom. 3:24; 5:15, 16, 17; Eph. 2:8-9). See note at Rom. 3:24.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How are good works related to salvation (cf. Eph. 2:8-9,10)?
2. How is continual sin in the life of the believer related to salvation (cf. 1 John 3:6,9)?
3. Does the chapter teach "sinless perfection?"
4. How is Romans 6 related to Romans 5 and 7?
5. Why is baptism discussed here?
6. Do Christians retain their old nature? Why?
7. What is the implication of PRESENT TENSE verbals dominating Rom. 6:1-14 and AORIST TENSE VERBALS in 15-23?

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